Homily from 11.1.26
Fr. Mike Tedone

Now, in our second reading, St. John is writing a letter to all of us. He says we do not know what we are becoming. What do you want to be when you grow up?

(Professions are named by children present.)

A pilot? Awesome! An NFL football player? The two of you are brothers. Would you two like to play on the same team? What team? The 49ers? Go 49ers! A singer? Great! Playing chess? A great chess player! A rock star? Great! You should join our choir and get some practice singing! All right, awesome!

We have so many hopes and dreams of what we want to be, and it takes a long time, with school and family, getting bigger and stronger, and studying more, to become what we are called to be. These are our hopes and dreams.

When I was in second grade, I wanted to be a chef, and at one point, I wanted to study dinosaurs. I wanted to become a dentist as well. But eventually, I thought, why don't I become a teacher? Why don't I become a priest? But we do not always know what we want to be. Some of you do not know what you want to be, and that's okay.
But one of the things we are now, and part of our job, no matter how old we are, is to be children of God. What do you think it means to be a child of God? Does it mean to worship God? To listen to His words in the Bible? Sometimes God asks something of us. Yes! We have to listen when He asks us so we know how to respond.
And especially, Jesus speaks to us in the Gospel and asks us to do things like love our neighbors. Not just our neighbors, but even our family, our siblings, and our friends. Sounds like being a child of God is a lot about paying attention, like paying attention to your parents. Part of that is, when you are paying attention, you are also learning how to be like them. Sometimes you want to be a little bit like your parents, to be loving like them and do their jobs. My sister became a nurse like my mom. She followed in my mom's footsteps.

Today, we are remembering all of these saints, people we know, like St. Ignatius of Loyola, who is in heaven. We're also remembering and thanking God for their examples, including those we do not know about who are also in heaven. They teach us how to be like Jesus, how to be like God the Father, who loves us so much.
Jesus, in our Gospel reading, gives us some examples of what it means to be children of the Father. He tells us about being peacemakers, being merciful, and being forgiving people.

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Have any of you ever had somebody be mean to you a few times? Have they ever apologized, or have you ever apologized to somebody before? Did they say, "I forgive you," or did you say, "I forgive you"? Did you ever have to say that?
When we say, "I forgive you," we are doing what Jesus wants us to do as His children. We say we are sorry, and when somebody says they are sorry to us, we forgive them because that is what Jesus does.

Sometimes it is hard to receive forgiveness, and God still asks us to try our best. Even if we are not forgiven by another person, we can still live lovingly.
So, Jesus gives us this example. And not only that, in our first reading, we find out that heaven is full of these people who are with God and worshipping God. When we come to Mass, we join them in a very special way.
Do any of you have people you miss who are in heaven with God, such as family and friends?
When we come to Mass, there is a part of the prayer before the Eucharist where we sing, "With all of the angels and all of the saints, we praise you," and say the "Holy, Holy."

When we do that, we are with those people in heaven. We are joining them, and they are joining us spiritually here in this church, even though we cannot see them, because we enter into this special, sacred moment with God and one another.
Then, when we receive Communion (some of you aren't old enough to receive Communion yet, and some of you are), we are united with them, and we ask Jesus to help us imitate their love so that we can imitate this love together.
Great question! So, the bread that comes to the altar, we believe that when we receive it, we are brought into union, where we are one with Jesus. And when you are in second grade, you'll get to do that.

Heaven is going to be full of the people we love, the animals we love. It is going to be a place of joy and greatness, but we are not going to forget the people here on Earth.
So, we believe as Catholics that people in heaven are here with us and praying for us, so that we can pray for one another.